

MCC Committee on Women's Concerns report



Report No. 61, May-June 1985

Women's Development: A Critique of Existing Theory

This issue of *Report* is designed to foster dialogue which is long overdue. These articles are to be viewed as the beginning of a series. As we ponder women's development, we must push on to consider additional questions about women's moral development and spiritual understanding. There are gender specific variations of understanding. Identifying them will enrich and enlarge our perceptions of persons and of God. It is an exciting task.

On a slightly different but still important track stand the issues of socialization. We need to examine the effect of environmental influences on what we identify as "feminine" and "masculine." The nature/nurture debate is long and old. Whatever it is we inherit, we are profoundly influenced by the powerful messages that surround us.

We need to examine the stories we read to small children; the toys with which children do their "work"; the tone of voice which differentiates gentle behaviors for girls and macho behaviors for boys; and patterns set in place by what we reward or sanction in children's behaviors. All of these determine whether or not it is good to be the gender we are and whether or not we will be good examples of the gender we are.

The articles in this issue encourage us to critique existing theory; they allow self-discovery and they call for expanded understanding. —*Anna Bowman*

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Story Fracturing: Essential Feminist Work

by *Ruth Krall*

A theory is an elaborate story which we humans build to explain the world to ourselves and others. These stories are based upon the human capacity to make observations about the world and its matrix of relationality. From our random and selected observations we



create stories in an attempt to make sense of the world. In these sense-making efforts we create elaborate explanations. In other words, we tell stories to ourselves about our own observations. In this process we dialogue with our observations and develop additional questions for future observations. We share our stories and questions with others. We construct theories.

A good theory, like a good story, is interesting to both the listener and the teller and it stimulates more theory telling. The benefit of a theory lies not in its absolute accuracy or truthfulness, but rather in its ability to stimulate research and study. Interesting theories do not need to tell the whole truth; they need only intimate that fascinating truths are contained within. The more compelling the theory, the more it is likely that the theory-builder will claim truthfulness for it. Once full truthfulness is claimed, listeners may forget that a theory can legitimately claim only partial truthfulness. Theory builders and listeners often forget that each theory (story) is culturebound and can only reflect the

selective observing and seeing which is encouraged by any particular culture.

What needs to grow increasingly clear to us as we consider stories (theories) of women's development is that all theories are constructed within historical and cultural contexts. A good absorbing theory, most apt to be intellectually satisfying to large numbers of persons, reflects closely the culture within which it was born. It puts into fresh words the undergirding beliefs and values of a culture. Because of the closeness of the reflection to common understandings, theory has the potential not only of revealing a culture's values to its people but also of re-entering the culture as a reinforcer of ongoing values. Thus, satisfying theories often function both as descriptors and creators of cultural realities.

No part of theory construction is free from moments of interaction with cultural constraints. Because of the complex interrelatedness of culture and theory, presuppositions may be hidden from both the teller and the listener. Often it is only a changing historical context which creates the possibility of seeing, understanding and reinterpreting the cultureboundness of any particular theory. Interesting theories describe the realities observed in language understood by creator and user of the theory. In this process of language utilization, the theory absorbs all the hidden ideologies of language and culture. As theories are used to explain observed experiences, they enter and re-enter the ongoing cultural heritage. No longer do they only begin to describe; instead they become part of a culture's definitions of truth. Now, the theory is used by teller and listener to prescribe future activities and behaviors. Descriptiveness gains a prescriptive function.

The change from description to prescription contains political realities. Adrienne Rich describes this phenomenon in her lecture on history (a theory of past events) as a political process.

History as advertisement for the state has existed as long as the state has existed; it is a way of justifying the hands that already hold power, of proving that others are unfit for power, in part by making invisible or cruelly distorting their experience and culture. It is nothing new to say that history is the version of events told by the conqueror, the dominator. Even the dominators acknowledge this. (1)

Within the process of writing history, those who become the master storytellers are frequently interested in creating, holding or transmitting power. The voices of the disinherited are silenced. The dissenting voice, the powerless voice, the ignored voice... all are lost in the telling and retelling of dominance-based stories. Those who are most estranged or lost within a culture are those who most rapidly lose their voices and stories. In the active or passive denying and silencing of these voices, the theory builders become part of the dominance of the powerful within any given culture. Rich claims that it is the historian who creates the story of history

and reminds us that those who, through silencing, become without a history and voice of their own lose their ability to see and understand their own past and present. In this status they are unable to imagine a future.

This brief excursion into feminist historical theory critique establishes some of the major themes of the paper which follows. In this paper developmental theory, as it relates to women and their psychosocial development, is examined as a story created by men. These story creators work within a stream of Western thought and culture. Members of the dominant class (men) construct theories about the subordinate class (women) to describe and explain women's life patterns. But the encoding of dominance into both the methods of research and the explanations of observed phenomena functions politically to mask understanding of women's realities. The encoded dominance functions politically to silence the ongoing voices of women. Silence, invisibility and distortion are the specific political consequences of dominance-oriented theory construction.

However, the enclosed and encircled acculturation of theory to a specific moment in history hides the theories' distortions. Only as historical moments evolve does the dominance factor become 'visible. North American feminism has created a changing historical awareness and reality for many women and men. As this change becomes historically significant, the dominance factor of men's theory construction becomes evident. As women began to critique men's theories about women, they initially saw only the content of these theories as faulty and inaccurate. Increasingly, women are recognizing that the methodologies of study may contain more damaging dominance than the content. Some women are recognizing their lost voices and stories in both research methodologies and in the data gained. These women who want to reclaim their voices from wordlessness and their realities from invisibility are critically examining the contemporary world view of the so-called "scientific method." They recognize that both study of method and study of interpretation are essential scientific moments for contemporary women.

Stage Theories

In our current century a developmental approach to understanding human behavior has become one dominant psychological theory. Within the developmentalist approach to psychology the stage theorists (Erikson, Kohlberg, Fowler and Piaget) have captured attention within the scientific community and have also gained popularity in the lay press. It is essential for women to think about the presuppositions and methods of stage theory if they are to critique it adequately.

Stage theory accepts dominant Western beliefs about the movement of both history and psychological development from past to future, from left to right, in broadly defined lineal patterns. This lineal movement may be either a direct horizontal or an upward-moving diagonal. Throughout the lineal movement from past to future, distinguishable historical or developmental segments (periods, stages) emerge and are visible to

the observer. Thus, developmental theories, based upon a concept of stages, are essentially progressive, moving always into the future. As progressive theories they are concerned more with the processes of change and less with patterns of constancy. Constancy is seen as stagnation, fixation, or cessation. The quality of the language itself suggests that change carries a positive valence while constancy carries a more negative one.

In stage theory, developmental progressions occur through the interaction of three possible variables: structures, motivations and processes (what, why and how). For example, a baby changes developmentally from a sucking infant to a chewing child as teeth emerge in a biologically pre-established time sequence. Teeth (the what) emerge in the mouth by growing through the gums (how) motivated by genetic-biological timing (why). Throughout the world human babies grow teeth as part of their biological maturation (universality).

While developmental theorists see human life as complex and multifactorial, they tend towards seeing underlying universal structures. Particular changes in human development are viewed as having roots in universal structural phenomena, therefore common to all humans, regardless of race, nationality, gender, etc. This premise allows selective observation of specific humans with later extrapolation to all humans. Biological unfolding takes precedence. Cultural factors enter into the explanations after universals are postulated, observed and described. Maturation (biological and psychological) and experience (cultural) are seen as the most important factors in an individual's specific jour-



ney through universal life stages. The individual's life success is measured as she enacts roles in a succession of predictable stages.

Much of Western literature is oriented to the quest experience, moving from a stable beginning through a series of trials to successful conclusions. It is possible to speculate that much developmental stage theory is a form of quest literature. Instead of being told in a recognizable story form, it is disguised in scientific language. The individual gains success by moving in and through a series of stages and gains mastery and dominance over them, thereby being both called and enabled to move into an emerging stage with a new set of challenges.

In stage theory construction, human development is divided into broad phases, periods or stages. These stages, often overlapping, are essentially chronological. While change can be by slow, nearly imperceptible progressions or by crisis, the unfolding of stages is precisely chronological. The progression of stages is fixed, universal and unvarying in its sequence. No stage can be voided or skipped. No stage can arise outside of the predictable sequence. Each stage ideally occupies a moment of preeminence. If this time is missed or if the chronological sequence is altered, positive development is not possible. As stage succeeds stage, a predictable life cycle is visible to the astute observer.

Stage theorists frequently recognize the complex interrelatedness of individual and culture. But since the stages are structurally universal, one pattern of human development is seen as desirable. In their descriptions of this forward-moving, optimistic and rigidly structured life journey, stage theorists define wellness, health, well-being, in terms of a single life journey. Observations of differences are defined as deviant from the norm. And this definition of deviance frequently carries a negative value.

Deviant development is seen as regressed, arrested, fixated. The progressive movement of the individual is stagnated. This so-called cessation of growth and change becomes labeled in pathological terminology. Until the blockage is removed, no future movement through the chronological stages is possible. The longer the sequential and chronological unfolding is delayed, the more unlikely is the successful developmental progression. Thus stage theory implies an upward diagonal movement as stage succeeds stage.

Women: Arrested Development or a Different Story?

Judith Plaskow, a contemporary Jewish theologian, comments upon men's theories about women:

...what I call "women's situation" or "women's experience" has two interrelated aspects: what has been said about women mostly by men, and the ways in which women have experienced themselves. (2)

Plaskow contends that men's voices and stories claim universality and assume, therefore, a mythic infallibil-

ity. Centuries of Western male scholarship have claimed truth as men have observed, described and interpreted women's nature and realities. The dominant social position of "expert" has been used to claim intellectual preeminence of men's theories about women. Those "experts" who have gained cultural acceptance of their work have frequently refuted debate and criticism from women.

Once the expert's teachings enter a culture's self-understanding, they participate in the self-renewing cycles of description and prescription. Descriptiveness, initially translated as "is-ness", becomes transposed into prescriptiveness and "should-ness." An expert's description of some women in a given historical moment becomes part of the cultural expectations for all women in all historical moments. The political interests of the expert observer are forgotten.

Social expectations, created by a series of male experts in a male-dominated culture, gain acceptance as the primary definers of woman. Written works move from statements which are particular (in the observed situation, fifty women were observed doing Y) to statements pretending universality (all women do Y). The final step is to claim desirability (all women who are healthy should do Y). The political reality that many of these definitions are external and foreign to a woman's own personal and social apperception of reality is ignored as non-relevant. In this political process the male expert's definitions dominate the primary cultural perceptions of a woman's nature and they set the parameters for her acceptable behaviors. The more deviant the woman is by her experiences of a personal reality, the more likely she is to be viewed as unfit and invisible.

The woman's own reality, her own sense of self and world, becomes blurred, invisible, silenced or distorted. As she learns to survive in a male-dominant culture and accepts expertly defined limits to her nature and roles, she begins to silence her own realities and actively molds her person and experiences to reach a cultural ideal. In this colonization of her mind, the woman learns to deny her own developmental unfolding and distorts her own nature.

By enculturation, the woman takes into her own nature the dominant definitions of who she is and what she ought to become. To survive, she accepts male metaphors with which to measure her relative successfulness in becoming woman. These metaphors become an important factor in her development as she seeks to be successful and to avoid failure. Deviance is actively denied, overcome or avoided.

Plaskow sees women's situation as a complex reality in which each woman confronts male defining and enters into a relationship with this defining... "within, in relationship to, and in opposition to those definitions." The woman remains secondary to the man in these processes. An essential task of women theorists is to shatter the story of secondariness. The woman, in her own storytelling, needs to become the primary definer of her own experiences and realities. As the woman



regains her voice from centuries of silence, challenges to dominant themes are inevitable. These challenges need to be developed at a content level. More importantly, they need to exist also at a methodology level.

Any discussion of developmental theory in relationship to girls and women must include a searching awareness of women's situation in a "polluted atmosphere" (3) of male dominance and expertness. Male research presuppositions, methods, interpretation styles and theory construction are not politically neutral. Developmental stage research needs to be aware of its own methodological presuppositions. Women need to examine this theory to see if it describes their own realities.

Much developmental theory assumes man as the prototype, first-born, fully human individual and sees woman as an afterthought, second-born and inferior. This presupposition underlies Western culture. Because of this presupposition, researchers see woman as an afterthought in their research, or continue her invisibility or see her only in her sexual relationship to the man. Each evidence of woman's essential developmental difference from man can be, and frequently is, translated as deficiency and deviancy. Only in her sexuality is she allowed a differing developmental pattern. And to many theorists this difference becomes a primary criterion for defining the woman.

Until this present decade, it has been unusual to have women as theory constructors in psychological theory. Only recently has the political nature of psychological research been identified. An essential task of the woman storyteller is to recognize the strengths and limitations of the methods chosen for study. Women storytellers need to consider if stage theory, with its great emphasis on dominance and progression, is a suitable method for explaining women's realities. Women theorists need to move through the process described by Plaskow of operating within, in relationship to and against men's defining. Hopefully, however, women theorists will soon be able to listen to women's stories in their multiplicity and will begin to value the particularity and multiplicity as one place from which to begin theory construction.

Erik Erikson: Patriarchal Naming

Erik Erikson's lifetime of studies in human development mark him as one of the most creative contemporary theory builders. His work is interesting in itself and it has stimulated much research in human growth and development. Medicine, psychology, religion and history have been affected by Erikson's theoretical formulations. While his work has built upon the writings of Sigmund and Anna Freud, he has extended psychoanalytic studies far beyond the framework established by them. He has taken analytic theory beyond the boundaries of childhood to include the whole lifespan.

Erikson's literary style has made his work widely accessible to professionals and non-professionals. His work has become one of the yardsticks by which we measure others... and ourselves. His wide use of the historical case method and his linguistic ability in metaphor formation enable readers to understand and identify with his writings.

His work reflects and mirrors the culture into which it was born. It is quite possible that the power and acceptability of his work is due to his ability to restate the central cultural themes and preoccupations of our Jewish-Christian Western heritage. In a secular culture he restates this heritage in non-religious language. His view of personal history is that of a lineal progression through chronologically discrete and sequential stages. Thus, while his work in storytelling (theory construction) appears fresh and exciting (and true), Erikson actually is participating in story retelling rather than in story creation. While his theory overtly concerns changes in personality through history, his work tends

to maintain classical Western ideas about human nature. As such his theory and his data are free to function descriptively and prescriptively with minimal possibilities of substantive criticism from within the dominant cultural story.

Nowhere is this perpetuation of a cultural stream of thought more evident than in Erikson's view of female nature and development. Much of Western thought throughout the centuries has viewed woman as an inferior, intransigent, mutilated opposite to the more perfect man. Because of her inherent defects, woman has been named as the person most responsible for the presence of sin in the human race. It is through her sexuality that sin is passed generationally to all members of the human species. Her genitals determine her nature and the evil of all humankind. In all ways but male sexual release and childbearing, she has been seen as a nuisance or as a necessary evil. (Cf. the writings of Tertullian, Augustine, Aristotle, etc.)

Contemporary Western scholarship has continued to see woman as mentally and morally inferior. (Cf. Freud, Erikson, Kohlberg) Generally speaking, male scholarship has defined her mental-emotional nature by her genitals—by her faulty, interior, inferior genitals. Through these many centuries of Western thought, men's preoccupation with woman's sexual difference and her consequent mental inferiority has created a cultural story in which a woman's value is tied to her genitals and sexual attractiveness. While her presence as womankind has been subsumed within the broader classification of mankind, she has been and continues to be assumed developmentally to exist somewhere between the child and the fully human male. Except in her sexuality, she has been assigned to invisibility. (Parenthetically, one can ask why Western nations are surprised at adolescent pregnancies. For many young women, the struggle to avoid invisibility and silence is made in and through the sexuality by which they were being totally defined.)

From his earliest work (*Childhood and Society*, 1950) up to his most recent published discussion (*Psychology Today*, 198-), Erikson has consistently claimed that a woman's sexuality determines her identity and development. The presence within her body of a vagina and uterus are the most essential factors in her life. His two chapters on "inner space" represent his most extensive work on women's development. For much of his other published work, he ignores the presence of girls and women. Meanwhile he assumes that his studies of boys and men describe human development.

When the boy-child or the great man is assumed to be the human prototype, then (for a stage theorist) all deviations are necessarily explained in lesser terms. The girl-woman is such a deviation. To Erikson, the deviation is the inner space (female sexual genitals and reproductive organs). Because the girl-child contains and discovers her inner space, she fears abandonment and being left empty. This fear, once developed, will last her whole lifetime. She will mourn with each menstruation and at menopause faces the final devastating blow to her self-image.

In his 1961 book, *Youth, Change and Challenge*, Erikson acknowledges his awareness that nowhere does the book deal with girls or women, either as subjects or as authors. Yet he claims for this book a basic universality. He acknowledges that men experience discomfort at seeing woman as the birth giver. Thus, the changes of girls and women in youth and adolescence can be ignored.

By 1968 Erikson wrote his first extended discussion of inner space, claiming that the young woman does not complete identity formation until mating and childbearing have been accomplished. All other activities, including those of great brilliance, do not assist her in identity development. Only in coitus and childbearing does she fulfill her essential nature. Until she completes this developmental progression, she remains stalled in her mastery and domination of movement in and through the various developmental stages.

The content of Erikson's work on inner space drew stinging critique from sociologists, psychologists and women scholars in a variety of fields. Yet, in 1975 he restated, as he did again in 1984, that women are developmentally determined by their genitals. He attacked his critics, deploring their need "...to replot the ground of consciousness."

As women began and continue to find the fractures of dominance in Erikson's expertness, they have critiqued his theory and its content in some of the following ways:

1. Maleness is assumed in his writings as the prototype for humanness.
2. Coitus and motherhood are the criteria for determining feminine maturity and developmental success.
3. Feminine achievements in the intellectual or social sphere are negated as ephemeral and trivial.
4. Biological construction of the human body takes precedence over women's social roles while an interactive possibility is inherent in men.

In addition, women express growing methodological concerns about Erikson's work. Stage theory, with its emphasis on dominance and progressiveness, is questioned. The presence of a mandatory life trajectory for all humans is also questioned. In addition, his resistance to "replotting the ground of consciousness" is in direct opposition to the concerns of many women for a new consciousness.

Conclusion

At present little is known about the various ways in which girls and women mature and continue life span development. It seems clear to this author that there are prerequisites to be considered by all students of women's development.

1. Woman must be valued as fully human in her own name and nature. She needs to be valued as the primary subject in studies which claim to be about her. Students of her nature need to see her as more than a mutilated, castrated or misbegotten male.

2. The presence of Western culture's woman-negating stories must be examined as polluting factors in each woman's ongoing life development.

3. Socio-cultural-historical factors must be considered along with biological-sexual ones. Woman's development is multifactorial.

4. Methodologies must be examined as critically as theory content. Often the methodology determines a study's outcomes. The political basis of all research moments must be recognized and acknowledged. It is doubtful that stage theories, as they are currently defined, can be used to construct a satisfying theory of women's development. Those who are not dominant and powerful cannot be understood via a methodology filled with mastery and dominance.

5. When women criticize male-expert theories of women's development, it is scientifically prudent to consider women's responses as expert testimony. Such criticism must be seriously examined. Women's stories are essential as the basis for theory construction about women.

In conclusion, stories and theories are the way in which we humans explain ourselves. When, through the processes of historical conscientization, a series of stories are discovered to be no longer functional, the fractures in these stories must be made explicitly visible. From the death of old, outworn stories, newer ones can emerge. In a culture such as contemporary Western culture, the presence of domination and exploitation calls into question the developmental stories which help maintain the systems of exploitation. Story silencing in the dispossessed is politically motivated. The shattering of exploiting, dominating, mastering, powerful stories is an essential step for the wordless and worldless towards gaining a sense of self and world.

One story which must be shattered is the story of woman as only a sexual being. In the shattering of that story, much care must be given to thoughtful storytelling in order that future theories, as they emerge, do not continue to function as further restrictors of woman's life and history. Research methodologies must be chosen and all research interpretation must give birth to a new consciousness. The political tasks of women's research must be overtly discussed and described so that the reader can be aware of distortions. More importantly, the reader can gain an essential understanding of the processes of theory development and the partialness of woman's story as revealed in any research theory.

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(1) Rich, Adrienne. 1983 February 15. *Against Amnesia: History and Personal Life*. Clark Lecture. Scripps College.

(2) Plaskow, Judith. 1981. *Sex, Sin and Grace*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America.

(3) Anne Wilson Schaef. 1982. *Women's Reality*. Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press.

Women's Development: An Alternative Frame of Reference

by Ruth Guengerich

As we have listened for centuries to the voices of men and the theories of development that their experience informs, so we have come more recently to notice not only the silence of women but the difficulty in hearing what they say when they speak. Yet in the different voice of women lies the truth of an ethic of care, the tie between relationship and responsibility, and the origins of aggression in the failure of connection. The failure to see the different reality of women's lives and to hear the differences in their voices stems in part from the assumption that there is

a single mode of social experience and interpretation. (Gilligan 1982, p. 173)

Our study of human development has been sadly one-sided. I, along with many other women, was aghast at the recent revelations that theories of human development are not that at all. They are theories of male development.

Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg and Jean Piaget all committed a variation of the same theme: women or girls have a different mentality, so leave them out of research.

Finally, there are now people seeing the light and not accepting the work of these researchers as human development research. These new researchers are attempting to define women's development to balance out the male developmental theories we all have been taught and have been basically the "victims" of for so many years.

This so-called human development research has been used as a weapon against women, by the men who failed to understand the women whom they were researching. Women's niche as second-class citizens was only reinforced by the proclamations of Freud and Piaget. Hence in the 1980's it is still common to hear men declare women to be "developmentally delayed" since women's developmental patterns are different.

"Different" is equated with "inferior". Anne Wilson Schaefer says that we, male and female, function under several systems, in which the White Male System predominates. "We all live in it, but it is not reality. It is not the way the world is," she says.

Schaefer describes four myths of this White Male System. These myths are reality for many people, male and female, black, Chicano or white. These myths are:

1. The White Male System is the only thing that exists;
2. The White Male System is innately superior;
3. The White Male System knows and understands everything;
4. It is possible to be totally logical, rational and objective.

A final, unspoken myth that summarizes all the above is that it is possible to be God. In other words, if it is possible to be the first four myths, then one can also be God—at least, the way the White Male System defines God. (Obviously this is a very lopsided definition of God as well!)

These myths have governed life for a long time. This innate superiority has allowed men to define women. Women's acceptance of men's innate superiority (and hence our acceptance of our innate inferiority) have allowed men to define themselves and us in two different categories.



In the end, Gilligan suggests that there is no one view for all of humanity, but that the voices she is discovering are more typically female. Ultimately, I believe that there are many voices and "systems" to understand.

I suggest (in a dualistic male format as Erikson has done) an alternative pattern of development. I believe that it is "typically female" yet some men I know find themselves more comfortable in this alternative scheme than in Erikson's stages of development.

The danger of this new proposal is that an either/or situation is set up, only somewhat improved over Erikson's model of declaring reality and teaching it as that, while he only researched men. The value of the alternative is that it legitimizes the female experience, or the experiences of all those who do not fit into the Eriksonian model. Finally, someone is describing something familiar.

My data-gathering is very soft research. It has been "tested" on people in workshops and group discussions. It has not been given the empirical test of analysis. From my reading, from my own observations, and my own learnings through counseling, I have developed an alternative frame of reference for women's development. To continue teaching the traditional human development theory counteracts all feminist understandings of who we are.

Though not perfect, this alternative legitimizes women, women's differences and women's reality. I do not suggest that these are necessarily *the* correct stages for women or for anyone else. I do claim that these are reality for many women. An understanding of what is crucial before change can occur. Understanding of what is allows for improved relationships, for mutuality to occur.

Age	Erikson	Guengerich
0-1	Basic trust vs. mistrust	Connectedness vs. disconnectedness
2-3	Autonomy vs. shame, doubt	Enfoldment vs. neglect
4-5	Initiative vs. guilt	Relationality vs. passivity
6-12	Industry vs. inferiority	Intimacy vs. industry
13-18	Identity vs. role confusion	Femininity vs. anonymity
19-25	Intimacy vs. isolation	Dependence vs. independence
26-40	Generativity vs. stagnation	Identity vs. role confusion
41-beyond	Ego integrity vs. despair	Coming into one's own

Due to lack of space, I will assume some understanding of Erikson's stages of development, and proceed to define the alternative scheme.

1. Connectedness vs. Disconnectedness

Gender identity is said to be determined by the age of 18 months. The female infant is working at connectedness. Mother-daughter relationships are connected, or undifferentiated. The separation that male infants are encouraged to work at at a very early age, for gender identity, is not necessary for the female infant, especially if the primary caregiver is the mother or another female. Except in unusual instances of severe neglect or abandonment, the connectedness between mother and daughter, and ultimately all women, is the norm. Disconnectedness that may occur at this early age will lead to identity confusion later.

Relationships are of utmost importance to females. Gilligan calls it a "world of connections." Job decisions and relocations are based on relationships. Opportunity for achievement is accepted or rejected depending on its effect on the female's connections.

These connections are both allowed and encouraged for females. Their importance continues throughout a woman's life. Autonomy and identity occur in relation to a woman's connections, not despite, or separate from.

2. Enfoldment vs. Neglect

If the connectedness or enfoldedness is not developed, the feelings of neglect will severely affect the female infant. Without relationships she does not learn trust, she does not learn to be female. The neglect leads to passivity, or non-relationships.

3. Relationality vs. Passivity

In Daniel Levinson's interviews, relationships play a relatively subordinate role in the individual drama of adult development (Gilligan, p. 153). Yet relationships are the overarching "ethic" throughout female development. Academic achievement is secondary to maintaining relationships. In elementary and junior high school it is usually female relationships, but by high school the female will likely put a relationship with a male over her academic progress. So she adores him and he adores him. That's great for him, but she neglects herself.

4. Intimacy vs. Industry

As the female enters school she struggles with intimacy vs. industry. Typically a female is rewarded for relationships, and typically relationships become a problem at this age. She is *not* rewarded for her industry or achieve-

ment, except to be cooperative. Although girls are more advanced in academic capabilities upon entering school, they are quickly discouraged from being competent, high achievers. Boys are rewarded for individuality, girls for conformity, being like other girls. The industrious girl is a misfit, and the attitudes toward her will worsen as she continues her education. The most extensive longitudinal study of student development conducted to date concludes that:

...even though men and women are presumably exposed to common liberal arts curriculum and other educational programs during the undergraduate years, it would seem that these programs serve more to preserve, rather than to reduce, stereotypic differences between men and women in behavior, personality, aspirations and achievement. (Hall and Sandler, p.2)

5. Femininity vs. Anonymity

The teen years are a crisis of femininity vs. anonymity. What is femininity? Is it okay to be feminine? How can one be female and competent? Is it feminine to be a jock, or athletic?

Traditional definitions of feminine have provided negative results for females. It is the answer to "What are little girls made of?" Of course, "sugar and spice and everything nice."

Gloria Steinem, in response to the comment, "You look too young to be forty!" replied, "This is what forty looks like!" Likewise, I say, "A female is feminine." We don't need terms like "tomboy." If a female does something, it is feminine—be it driving tractor, or being an astronaut, or cooking a seven-course dinner.

The inability to accept one's femininity leads to anonymity. If one cannot be that which one wants to be and be female, then who am I? What am I? The limited definition of femininity has led many women into anonymity. Females are lumped together as doing the same things, having the same characteristics and ignoring the uniqueness amongst all of them. To claim one's femininity will bring individuality; to reject it will bring anonymity.

6. Dependence vs. Independence

If femininity is accepted, the female can move to a stage of independence and interdependence that is not possible if femininity isn't accepted. By denying one's femininity, the female is relinquishing herself to anonymity, or a stage of not knowing who she is and not allowing others to truly know her. During this time also, many females make the choice about lifelong relationships. If she hasn't known independence and hasn't claimed her femininity, she is likely to move from dependence on father to dependence on husband. The next stage becomes quite traumatic then as she struggles with her

own role awareness (or lack of it) and frustration with the lack of productivity in her life.

7. Identity vs. Role Confusion

The independence leads to a woman clearly knowing herself, having established an identity that is her own. At this age a woman is struggling for survival possibly like never before. The arrival of children in her life can seem to seal a feeling of dependence, and provide her with an identity revolving around her family. The single woman is frequently waiting for a man to come along on whom she can rely, and in whom she can find an identity, and hence meaning in life.

The independence that is possible will allow a woman to find her own purpose in life and attain a sense of being that is fulfilling and meaningful, while in relationship with women and men, but not dependent on them for her identity.

8. Coming Into One's Own

From approximately age 40 (give or take a few years depending on the progress through the other stages) a woman comes into her own. She has found her independence, is in relationships and is pursuing her own areas of interest, be it a career, education, hobbies or any other activities. The woman faces a transition point in self-understanding, an ability to accept herself and examine herself for who and what she is. Relationships are still important. She expresses herself in relationships as a caring person, reaching out beyond herself to give, to continue that which enabled her to arrive at this point. For her meaning comes through relationships, and by giving to the relationship more than in seeing how much she will benefit from the relationship. The benefit comes from the ability to give, to care.

Conclusion

Times are changing. It is hoped that some aspects of the proposed scheme will change, as women experience understanding and equality in the world. Nevertheless, there is much that is desirable, for men and women, and I would not wish to see it change.

As Gilligan says, an alternative voice needs to be heard and meet the male voice for understanding. I wish to emphasize that my alternative scheme grows out of my understanding. I do not propose it as *the* way, but as a frame of reference for self-understanding. There are men who fit more neatly into the alternative scheme and women who fit more neatly into Erikson's model. These people are not wrong or misfits, though they may have experienced much misunderstanding in life for being "different."

Ruth Guengerich is director of student life at Hesston (Kans.) College. She holds a masters in education from James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Va.

For Further Reading

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News and Verbs

Thanks to **Teresa Pankratz** of Chicago for providing the illustrations included in this issue of *Report*. They should not be reproduced except by request.

Jocele Thut Meyer and **Art Meyer** look forward to re-establishing their home and closer family ties in Ohio after four years of MCC service. Jocele was the country representative and Art taught school in Grenada from 1981-1982. Since then they have served as co-directors of the development education office in Akron.

Jocele says they look forward to "putting into practice some of the principles we have been talking about." As part of an intentional Christian community, they will live in a newly constructed passive solar home and attempt to reclaim some of the strip-mined land surrounding it.

But they are not retiring completely from MCC service. Jocele and Art will continue to use their expertise

in development education to research, write and speak on the subject from Ohio.

Catherine Mumaw, chair of Goshen (Ind.) College's home economics department, is the recipient of the 1985 Leader Award of the Indiana Home Economics Association.

She is also currently serving a four-year term on the executive committee of the International Federation for Home Economics, a United Nations-affiliated organization concerned with promoting the improvement of family life globally.

Has something noteworthy happened in your life or in the life of a friend or colleague? Share **newsworthy events** with other *Report* readers by contributing "News and Verbs" items to Emily Will, editor, MCC, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, Pa. 17501.

The **June Schwartztruber Fund** offers financial assistance to persons seeking training or working in the areas of: women and minorities in ministry and church leadership, peace and justice, urban ministries and cross-cultural projects.

The fund was established as a memorial to June at the time of her death, July 9, 1984. June and her husband, Hubert, helped plant nearly a dozen new churches and fellowship groups in Ontario in the past five years. June is also warmly remembered for her selfless love as program coordinator in a high-rise apartment building for elderly persons, single parent and low-income families and multi-racial residents.

Individuals desiring to either apply for a grant or contribute to the fund may write for more information to the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec, 131 Erb St. West, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 1T7.

Kathy Gnagey Short, associate professor of education at Goshen (Ind.) College, has received a post-doctoral fellowship from the Ohio State University. This fall Kathy will join a reading research project directed by Charlotte Huck, an internationally recognized authority on children's literature.

Laura Loewen, newly returned from Zambia and Zimbabwe where she was country representative for MCC's programs for three years, is studying at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Ind. From Clearbrook, B.C., she was previously employed in the overseas department of MCC Canada.

Goshen College is seeking a **director for its physical plant**, beginning Jan. 1, 1986, and an **associate director of international education**, half-time beginning Aug. 15. The first position includes supervision of a large staff and budget development and control. The second involves advising, screening and orienting students and faculty in regard to the study-service trimester. For more information contact Stuart W. Showalter, Director of Information Services, Goshen College, Goshen, Ind. 46526. Phone (219) 533-3161.

The ink is barely dry on **Ruth Unrau's** manuscript, a compilation of stories about General Conference women, to be published in the summer of 1986 by Faith and Life Press. The book is to be a sequel to *Full Circle*, edited by Mary Lou Cummings in 1978. Ruth, an assistant librarian at Bethel College, wrote the book with the financial backing of a Showalter grant.

Three General Conference Mennonite organizations are offering scholarship funds and travel subsidies to persons wanting training to become **workshop leaders on "parenting for peace and justice."** For more information contact Myrna or Randy Krehbiel, Commission on Education; Robert Hull, Commission on Home Ministries; or Joan Wiebe, Women in Mission. All can be reached at Box 347, Newton, Kan. 67114; (316) 283-5100.

Herald Press will release a work by **Barbara Keener Shenk** this summer. Entitled *The God of Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel*, Barbara says it is a distillation of her life-long studies. Barbara resides in Lancaster, Pa. and often serves as a resource person on women and the Bible.

Fifty percent of all incarcerated women in the United States are Black—even though Black women represent less than 12 percent of the female adult population.

Eleanor Beachy was licensed for the ministry of Berghal Church in Pawnee Rock, Kan. on June 9.

Gwen Reed has been named personnel placement counselor at Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions in Salunga, Pa. The 1985 graduate of Eastern Mennonite College is also responsible for the administration of voluntary service units in Syracuse, N.Y., Mobile, Ala. and Homestead, Fla.

MCC Canada's Peace and Social Concerns in helping to underwrite the publication of **excerpts from Anna Baerg's extensive writings**. Done originally in German, Baerg's diary and writings record her family's life in Russia and flight from that country during World War II. The excerpts, to be published by CMBC Publishers, will be a valuable resource on the life and work of one of this century's outstanding women.

The newest edition of *Battered Women's Directory* is now available. This **comprehensive directory of shelters**, services and educational resources for battered women and service providers in the United States may be ordered from: Directory-T. Mehlman, Box E-94, Earlham College, Richmond, Ind. 47374. Cost is \$10 for individuals and \$15 for institutions.

A seminar on pornography is being planned for Winnipeg-area Mennonite churches in September. Peggy Regehr, staffperson for the Committee on Women's Concerns, will assist MCC Manitoba's Peace and Social Concerns Committee in planning and resourcing the seminar.

Working towards a "theology of humanhood," the **All-India Council of Christian Women** met late last year in Bangalore, India. Participants addressed the forces that undermine women's self-esteem in that society, such as low legal status, economic and political marginalization, cultural and religious pressures, and specifically, "the pernicious system of dowry which treats women as nonentities and liabilities."

Among the recommendations for ways to transcend existing patriarchal, hierarchical patterns, the Christian women called upon churches to refuse to solemnize marriages where dowry is given or taken.

Former *Report* editor **Sue Clemmer Steiner** has been named interim mission consultant for the Ontario and Quebec Inter-Mennonite conferences. She will fill in for Hubert Schwartzentruber, relating to some 15 conference-funded projects, while he is on a 10-month sabbatical leave. Sue has been employed as a youth worker for the Mennonite Conference of Quebec.

Katie Funk Wiebe was the keynote speaker at May graduation ceremonies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Ind.

Norma Johnson will begin studies in a masters of divinity program this fall at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Ind. She is currently the coordinator of the pastoral team at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Kathryn Klassen Neufeld is serving as the 1985 national coordinator of the Evangelical Women's Caucus, an international, ecumenical Christian feminist organization. Kathryn previously worked with MCC for 14 years and is now a therapist at a feminist counseling center called Life Choices in the San Joaquin Valley, Calif. She holds a doctorate in counseling psychology and is completing a post-doctoral residency at a psychiatric hospital.

Marty Kolb, a recent graduate of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, has been named campus pastor of Hesston (Kan.) College. Marty formerly directed the Richmond, Va. Discipleship Program for the Mennonite Board of Missions.

Ruth Buxman, pastor of the First Church of San Francisco, was ordained on May 26.

Seventy-two-year-old **Dorothy Mills**, affectionately known as "grandmother" by the Innu people of Davis Inlet, Labrador, has been an ardent advocate for these native Americans, despite the misunderstanding and even persecution it has sometimes brought her. Dorothy, from California, is serving with MCC as a community worker.

When the Newfoundland government last year suspended Dorothy for her refusal to implement a housing policy that she thought was unfair to the Innu, the community offered to help pay her living expenses.

The MCC Committee on Women's Concerns **reaffirmed its binational make-up** at its June 7-8 meeting in Chicago, but considered ways to slightly alter the committee composition to better facilitate Canadian outreach. The committee members, four Canadians and five U.S. Americans, also agreed to put a discussion of abortion on the agenda of their next meeting, to be held in Winnipeg in November.

Wilma Derksen is the new western associate editor for the *Mennonite Reporter*. A graduate of the communications program at Red River Community College, Wilma has had a variety of journalism experiences, both in radio and newspaper. She will be based in Winnipeg.

Wife abuse is evidently a regular practice in a number of evangelical homes, and a study of 5,700 evangelical pastors shows that the pastors tend to relate such abuse to a "wife's failure to submit in the marriage."

The study, done by doctoral student James Aldurf at the Fuller Graduate School of Psychology, indicates that a substantial number of ministers are willing to accept some violence in the home rather than advise separation which might lead to divorce.

REPORT is published bi-monthly by the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns. The committee, formed in 1973, believes that Jesus Christ teaches equality of all persons. It strives to promote this belief through sharing information, concerns and ideas relating to problems and issues which affect the status of women in church and society. Articles and views presented in *REPORT* do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Committee on Women's Concerns. Correspondence should be addressed to Editor Emily Will at MCC, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501.

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